



**United States Border Patrol
San Diego Sector
Public Information Office
2411 Boswell Road
San Diego, California 91914-3519
(619) 216-4182**



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2001

Border Patrol Rescues Freezing Migrants

New pro-active approach successful in extreme weather rescues

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Border Patrol emergency response teams rescued 65 freezing migrants in the Mt. Laguna area over the weekend.

Specially trained and equipped units from the Border Patrol's FAST team (*First Alert Snow Team*) and BORSTAR (*Border Patrol's Search, Trauma and Rescue Team*) tracked and rescued four separate groups of ill-prepared migrants wandering through the Mt. Laguna area. Some of the groups had been walking through the freezing mountains for two days.

The 52 men and 13 women rescued had been exposed to heavy rain, sleet and snow and were experiencing the first stages of hypothermia. Border Patrol rescue teams and Emergency Medical Technicians provided necessary aid. The individuals were provided with blankets, warm clothing and hotpacks and voluntarily returned to Mexico.

The creation of the FAST team has the Border Patrol taking a more pro-active approach to these extreme weather rescues. The teams were put on early alert Thursday evening and diligently searched remote locations for evidence of migrants crossing into dangerous areas. Last year, three migrants died of cold weather exposure in the remote Laguna Mountains area. No deaths have been reported so far this year.

The use of FAST and BORSTAR in remote search and rescue operations is part of the United States Border Patrol's ongoing commitment to protecting human life and promoting a safe environment along our border.

-USBP-